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LETTER DATED 18 JANUARY 1994 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

The purpose of the present letter is to inform the Security Council of recent developments concerning the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) with regard to Srebrenica and Tuzla, which are two of the safe areas established in Bosnia and Herzegovina by resolution 824 (1993).

The members of the Security Council will be aware of the Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government that participated in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Brussels on 10 and 11 January 1994. Paragraphs 23 to 25 of that Declaration refer to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and read as follows:

> "23. As members of the Alliance, we deplore the continuing conflict in the former Yugoslavia. We continue to believe that the conflict in Bosnia must be settled at the negotiating table and not on the battlefield. Only the parties can bring peace to the former Yugoslavia. Only they can agree to lay down their arms and end the violence which for these many months has only served to demonstrate that no side can prevail in the pursuit of military victory.
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> "24. We are united in supporting the efforts of the United Nations and the European Union to secure a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Bosnia, agreeable to all parties, and we commend the European Union Action Plan of 22 November 1993 to secure such a negotiated settlement. We reaffirm our determination to contribute to the implementation of a viable settlement reached in good faith. We commend the front-line States for their key role in enforcing sanctions against those who continue to promote violence and aggression. We welcome the cooperation between NATO and the Western European Union in maintaining sanctions enforcement in the Adriatic.
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> "25. We denounce the violations by the parties of the agreements they have already signed to implement a cease-fire and to permit the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance to the victims of this terrible conflict. This situation cannot be tolerated. We urge all the parties to respect their agreements. We are determined to eliminate obstacles to the

accomplishment of the UNPROFOR mandate. We will continue operations to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia. We call for the full implementation of the Security Council resolutions regarding the reinforcement of UNPROFOR. We reaffirm our readiness under the authority of the Security Council and, in accordance with the Alliance decisions of 2 and 9 August 1993, to carry out air strikes in order to prevent the strangulation of Sarajevo, the safe areas and other threatened areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this context, we urge the UNPROFOR authorities to draw up urgently plans to ensure that the blocked rotation of the UNPROFOR contingent in Srebrenica can take place and to examine how the airport at Tuzla can be opened for humanitarian relief purposes."

Immediately after the Declaration was published, France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which are major contributors of troops to UNPROFOR's Bosnia and Herzegovina Command, drew my attention to the last two sentences of paragraph 25 and stressed the particular importance which they attached to early action by UNPROFOR with regard to Srebrenica and Tuzla. They also put forward ideas about exceptional command-and-control arrangements which they thought would be appropriate for military operations specifically related to the current situation in those two safe areas.

I also received, on 14 and 15 January, démarches in which the Russian Federation reiterated to me its position that any use of force in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be subject to prior consultations by the Secretary-General with the members of the Security Council and that only after such consultations should a decision be made to seek enforcement assistance from any source, including NATO.

As the members of the Security Council are aware, operational arrangements have been in place since August 1993 for the provision by NATO of air power to support UNPROFOR in defending United Nations personnel who may come under deliberate attack from one or other of the conflicting parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These arrangements have been tested in a number of exercises and are fully operational. The first decision to initiate the use of air power for this purpose would be taken by me, on the basis of a request by my Special Representative for the former Yugoslavia, acting on a recommendation by the Force Commander of UNPROFOR.

The idea of using air power to support a military operation with regard to Srebrenica and Tuzla gives rise to issues which do not arise in the context of air support for the defence of United Nations personnel. The crucial difference is that the use of air power in the former case implies that UNPROFOR could launch offensive action against Bosnian Serb elements which obstructed - or threatened to obstruct - UNPROFOR's military operations, as opposed to the purely defensive actions implied in the latter case. On 12 January 1994, I accordingly instructed my Special Representative, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, to undertake an urgent preparatory study of the proposal. He delivered his report to me in Geneva on 17 January and I discussed it at length that day with him. Mr. Thorvald Stoltenberg, Co-Chairman of the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and senior members of the Secretariat.

Mr. Akashi's report reaffirmed the urgent necessity of rotating the contingent in Srebrenica and this was endorsed at yesterday's meeting. Mr. Akashi described his recent efforts with the Bosnian Serb leadership to attain this objective by political agreement. His report confirmed that the use of air power could make an important contribution if a military operation by UNPROFOR should be required to ensure rotation of the contingent.

As regards Tuzla, the meeting's conclusion was that the opening of the main airfield there would improve the flow of humanitarian supplies to the Tuzla safe area, although the land routes currently in use were the most important channel for the delivery of such supplies. The use of air power could help to achieve the opening of the main airfield, if a military operation was necessary for this purpose.

In both cases, however, it was clear that other military assets would also be required as the use of air power, or the threat of its use, could not alone achieve the desired objectives. These other military assets, to be used in conjunction with air power, would be in excess of those currently available to UNPROFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the light of yesterday's meeting, I have instructed Mr. Akashi to prepare forthwith detailed plans for military operations, with the use of air power as required, to ensure the rotation of the Srebrenica contingent and the opening of the main airfield at Tuzla and to submit these plans to me as a matter of urgency. I have further asked Mr. Akashi to coordinate this work closely with NATO's Southern Command in Naples and I am today sending Under-Secretary-General Goulding to Brussels to brief the Secretary-General of NATO.

As soon as I have Mr. Akashi's plans, I will revert to the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI